ALBERTA FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES COUNCIL

July 12, 2001

Honorable Mike Cardinal
Minister, Sustainable Resource Development
Room 420 Legislature Building
10800-97 Ave
Edmonton Alberta
T5K 2B6

Dear Mr. Cardinal:

The Alberta Forest Genetic Resources Council (AFGRC) has completed its first year of operation. It is my pleasure to submit to you, the AFGRC Annual Report for the 2000-2001 fiscal year. If you require any additional information about the council or its affairs, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

C.B. (Cliff) Smith
Chair, AFGRC

Scientific Sector

Dr. John Spence,
johnspence@ualberta.ca
Dr. Bruce Dancik
bruce.dancik@ualberta.ca
Dr. Ken Mallett
kmallett@nrcan.gc.ca

Biological Sector

Mr. Harry Stelfox
harry.stelfox@gov.ab.ca

Industry Sector

Mr. Robert Udell
bob_udell@weldwood.com
Dr. Sally John
sjf@saltspring.com
Mr. J.P. Bielech
jpmdfp@telusplanet.net
Mr. Bryden Ward
wardbr@alpac.ca
Mr. Bruce Macmillan
bruce.macmillan@
weyerhaeuser.com

Government Sector

Mr. Doug Sklar
Doug.Sklar@gov.ab.ca
Dr. Narinder Dhir
Narinder.Dhir@gov.ab.ca
Mr. Neil Barker
Neil.Barker@gov.ab.ca

Chair

Mr. C.B. (Cliff) Smith

Mailing Address

432 Meadowview Terrace
Sherwood Park, AB
T8H 1K7

Phone (780) 449-5628
Fax (780) 449-5628

E-mail

cbsmith@compusmart.ab.ca

Alberta Forest Genetic Resources Council

Annual Report

2000-2001

2007-03664/

First Annual Report for the Alberta Forest Genetic Resources Council 2000-2001

The Alberta Forest Genetics Resource Council (AFGRC) was formed in the spring of 2000 and held its inaugural meeting on April 7,2000. The council advises the provincial Minister of Sustainable Resource Development and the forestry community on policy and regulation related to the management of the gene resources of Alberta's forests. The council was formed on the basis of a detailed framework that was developed by an organizing committee including experts from the provincial government, the forest industry and the academic community.

The goal of the council is to establish a foundation for the management of forest genetic resources including the operational delivery of tree improvement programs, within the context of sustainable forest management. The goal focuses on four themes: genetic gain, adaptation, genetic diversity, and conservation.

The 13-member council includes scientific experts, policy makers, and practitioners from the scientific community, the forest industry, the biological sector and the provincial government. From the scientific community are two members from the University of Alberta, and one from the Canadian Forest Service. The forest industry has five seats on council - four members represent member companies of the Alberta Forest Products Association (AFPA) (three coniferous and one hardwood) and one member represents companies that do not belong to the AFPA. The government of Alberta has four representatives - three from Land and Forest Service and a wildlife biologist from the Fish and Wildlife Division, who represents the biological sector. The council chair from the private sector provides secretariat services.

More than 22 tree improvement programs, involving six native conifer and two native deciduous species, are active in Alberta. Several non-native species are under consideration, either as pure species or as parents in hybrid programs. Non-native tree species programs are presently targeted to private land forestry. Most programs are being developed through cooperative arrangements, either among companies or between the government and single or multiple companies.

Over the past 25 years, the province has successfully established and led a strong program in forest genetics and tree improvement. Scientists at Alberta's universities and research institutions have completed many leading-edge research initiatives in forest genetics. In the past decade, however, tree improvement programs have shifted to the private sector through industry-led programs involving individual companies and/or industry or government/industry cooperatives. While maintaining a smaller role in operational tree improvement, the province will take on more of a policy and regulatory role, particularly in deployment. As well, it will continue its primary responsibility in the conservation of forest gene resources. Given the increasing number of players in tree improvement programs, the creation of AFGRC is most timely to ensure strong coordination, cooperation, and communication.

The council convened three times during the year. Since its inaugural meeting in April 2000, the council has tackled a number of issues, several of which are ongoing:

- a status report on genetic tree improvement in Alberta;
- a policy framework for deployment of genetically improved stock onto public lands;
- status and strategy papers on the conservation of forest gene resources;
- a position paper on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and GMO trees; and
- benchmarking of genetic resources of forest trees.

In addition to the above, the Council involved itself in a number of initiatives including a Terms of Reference (Goal, Vision, Mission Mandate statements) that follow, along with internal operational policy and the development of a web site. Further information about the council and the initiatives is available on the web site. http://www.gov.ab.ca/env/forests.html

FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES COUNCIL

GOAL

To establish a solid foundation for the management of forest genetic resources in Alberta, including the operational delivery of tree improvement programs in the context of the principles of sustainable forest management.

The goal is anchored by the following four pillars.

- **Genetic Gain**
  (growth and yield; insect/disease resistance; allowable cut effect)

- **Adaptation**
  (evolutionary imprint; biological suitability to site and climate)

- **Genetic Diversity**
  (natural variation; ecosystem resilience and health)

- **Conservation**
  (heritage resource; gene pool)